

Phone
253-6401

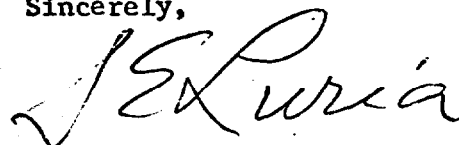
Room E17-110
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

November 5, 1979

Dear Colleague:

In view of the events at Boston University, I am circulating on behalf of a group of colleagues the following statement. I hope you will join us by signing it and returning the signed copy to me. The list of signers will be made public and transmitted to the Board of Trustees of Boston University.

Sincerely,



sel/a

S. E. Luria, M.D.
Institute Professor Emeritus
M.I.T.

STATEMENT

As members of the academic community, we condemn the Silber Administration at Boston University for bringing action to suspend or dismiss six tenured professors who in September expressed their support of striking clerical workers by holding the first week of classes outside their assigned classrooms. To contemplate such serious action as the revocation of tenure on these trivial grounds can be understood in no other way but as an attack on fundamental traditions of academic freedom.

This is the latest in a pattern of violations of civil liberties for which the administration of John Silber has become notorious in the academic community and in the nation at large. He has censored the student press and the university radio station; violated the rights of employees and been found guilty of unfair labor practices by the NLRB; withheld merit increases from faculty who have spoken out against him; wilfully fired administrators who disagreed with him; and ensured his control of the Board of Trustees by forcing off the Board any trustees who opposed his policies.

Because these policies are not only destructive to Boston University but set precedents which jeopardize the integrity of academic freedom everywhere, we call for the removal of John Silber as President. Until that time, we feel it inappropriate for us to continue to extend to Boston University the support and cooperation that are traditional within the academic community.

Name

Institution and Department

Sign overleaf if necessary

A Statement in Support of our Colleagues at Boston University

circulated for your signature by:

Salvador E. Luria, Institute Professor Emeritus, M.I.T.

John Womack, Professor of History, Harvard University

Noam Chomsky, Professor of Linguistics, M.I.T.

Everett Mendelsohn, Professor of the History of Science, Harvard

As members of the academic community, we condemn the administration of John Silber at Boston University for bringing action to suspend or dismiss five tenured professors (Andrew Dibner, Psychology; Murray Levin, Political Science; Fritz Ringer, History; Caryl Rivers, Journalism; Howard Zinn, Political Science) who in September, 1979 expressed their support of striking B.U. clerical workers by holding the first week of classes away from the assigned classrooms or by canceling some classes. To contemplate such serious action as the revocation of tenure on these trivial grounds can be understood in no other way but as an attack on fundamental traditions of academic freedom.

This is the latest in a pattern of attacks on civil liberties for which the administration of John Silber has become notorious in the academic community and in the nation at large. According to the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, he has repeatedly censored the student press and the university radio station. According to the National Labor Relations Board, his administration has been guilty of unfair labor practices against B.U. employees. According to the faculty union, he has withheld merit increases from faculty who have spoken out against him or who have been active in the union. The record indicates that administrators who disagree with him do not last long (of the ten deans who called for Silber's resignation in 1976, none remains in office). According to former Trustees (quoted in the Boston Globe recently) he maintains control of the Board of Trustees by forcing off the Board those trustees who oppose his policies.

Because such policies are not only destructive to Boston University but set precedents which jeopardize the integrity of academic freedom everywhere, we question the fitness of John Silber to remain as president of Boston University.

In the meantime, we protest his actions against the five tenured professors and call on the academic community to withhold cooperation from the B.U. Administration until these charges are dropped.

Name

Institution

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